MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REINHARDT UNIVERSITY

“TRANSFORMING PROFESSIONALS INTO RESPONSIVE TEACHERS”

MAT INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR FALL 2015 ADMISSION
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
The Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program for Early Childhood Education is designed for college graduates with undergraduate degrees in fields other than education who are planning a career in the teaching profession and are seeking initial certification. Completion of the MAT program leads to a master’s degree and recommendation for a Georgia Level 5 Certificate in Early Childhood (P-5) Education. The MAT program includes advanced content preparation as well as professional education coursework. The goal of the MAT program is to transform candidates into professional educators who provide responsive teaching.

A MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING PROGRAM
FOR
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
THROUGH THE PRICE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AT REINHARDT UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

BENEFITS OF THE MAT PROGRAM
✓ Designed for the Working Adult
✓ Leads to a Master's Degree and Recommendation for a Georgia Level 5 Certificate in Early Childhood (P-5) Education
✓ Offered At Two Locations--The North Fulton Center In Alpharetta and the Main Campus In Waleska
✓ Designed as a Cohort Model--One Group Takes All Courses Together
✓ Offered in the Evening through Face-To-Face Delivery or a Blend of On-Line and Face-To-Face Delivery
✓ Two Classes during each 8-Week Session, Earning a Total of 12 Hours per Semester
✓ Required Field Experiences Designed on an Individual Basis
✓ Three Semesters to Complete Coursework, Followed by One Semester of Fulltime Student Teaching After All Coursework is Completed

TRANSFORMING PROFESSIONALS INTO RESPONSIVE TEACHERS
In support of the PSOE Mission, the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program for Early Childhood Education prepares adult learners for persistent and personalized teacher growth throughout their careers. In a quest for transformative changes in adult professionals as they develop and refine responsive teaching practices, the MAT program is:

✓ COLLABORATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE. Adult professionals who enter the MAT program will bring with them very diverse backgrounds and experiences. Throughout the MAT preparation program, the adult learners will be continually transforming as professionals and will need consistent encouragement to continue to evolve. The MAT program will provide a community of learning, caring, and inquiry where adult learners can develop collaborative partnerships and receive informed leadership and consistent faculty support as they investigate current, professional “best practices” that define effective teaching and learning for today’s diverse students.

✓ RESPONSIVE. Responsive teaching is using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and preferred learning styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. The MAT program will model the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of responsive teaching and provide powerful images of what the practice looks like and how it positively impacts the learning of individual learners.

✓ PROBLEM-FOCUSED. The MAT program is based on the assumption that not all students are alike, and that teaching is strengthened when adult professionals explore the merits of a range of approaches to meet the learning needs of students. The MAT program will assist the adult learners in developing a reflective, problem-solving orientation to teaching by engaging them in class- and school-based inquiry experiences. To assist adult professionals in developing the practice of reflecting on their students as individual students, the MAT program will ensure that adult professionals develop the skill and will to study, chart, and respond to students’ learning needs.

✓ APPLICATION-ORIENTED. The MAT program will ensure that adult professionals have numerous focused and well-structured field experience opportunities to examine quality curriculum, flexible approaches to instruction, diagnostic assessment procedures, and effective classroom management routines for future classroom practice.
Dear Interested Applicant,

We appreciate your inquiry about our Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program in Early Childhood Education at Reinhardt University. Approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), the MAT Program is designed for college graduates with undergraduate degrees in fields other than education who are planning a career in the teaching profession and are seeking initial certification. Completion of the MAT Program leads to a master’s degree and recommendation for a Georgia Level 5 Certificate in Early Childhood Education. This certification will allow you to teach in a Georgia pre-kindergarten through fifth grade classroom. The MAT program includes advanced content preparation as well as professional education coursework. The goal of the MAT program is to transform candidates into professional educators who provide responsive teaching.

This Fall 2015 MAT Information Packet has been updated with new admission requirements that reflect major changes in Georgia educator preparation. These changes have been made to ensure all classroom teachers are ready on day one of their careers. Today’s work environment expects more of students than ever before; therefore, teachers must be better prepared to help them achieve at higher levels. As a starting point in this transformation, the policies that influence preparation and entry into the education profession have changed. The changes are aimed at raising the bar so that new teachers are ready for the challenges inherent in realizing the promises of all PK-12 reforms in Georgia and the nation.

The Price School of Education is ready for these reforms, and we look forward to our seventh MAT Cohort that will begin in Fall 2015. Thank you for contacting Reinhardt University about the MAT Program, and we hope you will consider application.

For program information contact:
Dr. Cindy Kiernan
Price School of Education
770-720-5889
CMK@Reinhardt.edu
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In the past six years, many individuals have contacted the Price School of Education with specific questions about the MAT Program in Early Childhood Education. After reading the responses, we hope you will feel free to e-mail Dr. Cindy Kiernan at CMK@Reinhartd.edu if you have additional questions.

How diverse are the students who enter the MAT Program?
The MAT Program at Reinhardt University was initiated in Fall 2009, and 108 students have graduated from the program. All of the MAT students come from very diverse backgrounds. While some have had classroom experience as substitute teachers or paraprofessionals, many do not have any experience and are still working in the business world or hold the position of “stay-at-home mom”. Because our program is a Cohort Model, MAT students begin classes with a group of people and move through their schedule of classes to graduation with that same group of individuals at the same location. The Cohort Model has proven to be beneficial because it allows the MAT students to form bonds with their classmates and learn from them as well. The camaraderie formed in each MAT Cohort is a strong source of encouragement and support, especially for those who have not been in school for a while. Our MAT students have numerous opportunities to work in groups where they continue to develop leadership, collaboration, and teamwork skills within the program.

What is Responsive Teaching?
A responsive teacher uses cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and preferred learning styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. An effective teacher responds actively and positively to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students rather than the more typical pattern of teaching the class as though all individuals in it were basically alike. In other words, one size does not fit all!

When are the MAT Classes offered, and where are the classes held?
Class times are Mondays & Wednesdays from 6-10:50 p.m. MAT classes are offered at the Main Campus in Waleska, Georgia, and the North Fulton Center in Alpharetta, Georgia.

How many classes will I take each semester?
You will take two classes during each eight-week session for a total of four courses each semester.

How long will it take me to graduate?
The MAT program takes two years or four semesters to complete. This includes three semesters to complete coursework, followed by one semester of full-time Candidate Teaching after all coursework is completed.

Will I be a full-time college student?
You will be taking 12 credit hours each semester which is considered full-time.

Why not offer the MAT program during the summer between the first and second year?
The summer after the first year has been set aside for MAT students to review Early Childhood Curriculum in the areas of Reading/Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, as well as Health, Physical Education, and the Fine Arts. This review is in preparation for the two GACE Content Area Assessments in Early Childhood Education. In order to prepare for the tests, MAT students self-select strategies for content review, such as study groups, instructional modules, textbooks, Web Quests or websites, online courses, workshops, and/or traditional face-to-face course study. All MAT students must submit passing GACE Content Area Assessment scores in Early Childhood Education to enter Candidate Teaching, the final semester of the program. The purpose of the GACE Content Area Assessments is to help the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the state’s teacher accreditation agency, ensure that candidates have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job of an educator in Georgia’s public schools.

Is the MAT program offered on-line?
At the present time, the MAT program is not offered on-line. However, some courses do offer a blend of on-line and face-to-face delivery.
Is it possible to start the MAT Program in the spring?  
At present, a new MAT Cohort will only begin each fall semester.

Does the MAT Program in Early Childhood Education accept transfer credits?  
The MAT Program follows a Cohort Model so there are no transfer courses accepted as credit.

Is there a portfolio, comprehensive examination, thesis, or project requirement for the MAT Program? 
At present, there is an electronic portfolio requirement for our MAT program. At the end of Candidate Teaching (the final semester of the program), MAT candidates formally present their completed portfolio to MAT faculty members and their peers. MAT students work on their portfolio throughout the program. There is no comprehensive examination or thesis requirement for the MAT Program.

When and where will I student teach in my final semester? 
MAT Candidate Teaching is the last semester of your program. In Candidate Teaching, you will be placed in a school with a specific teacher for 15-16 weeks or approximately 600 hours. Where a MAT candidate will be placed will be determined collaboratively by our Field Experience Office and the MAT candidate during the semester before Candidate Teaching. Usually, candidates are placed in surrounding counties, such as in the Cherokee, Cobb, Pickens, or Bartow school district. It is a full-time commitment for an entire semester so you cannot continue working during Candidate Teaching. If this might cause a financial challenge, you need to begin planning now. Also, MAT students will not be placed in schools for Candidate Teaching where they have been or are presently employed; where they have attended as young students; or where they have had or presently have children or close relatives in attendance or employed.

How will earlier field experiences be arranged? 
Because of the diverse quantity and quality of classroom experience of the students within the MAT Program, details and scheduling of early field experiences will also be determined by the Field Experiences Office on an individual, case-by-case basis. In the first three MAT Cohorts, MAT students have been placed in Cherokee, Cobb, Pickens, and Bartow Counties for their field experiences. Some performed their observations early in the program at approved private school settings.

What exactly are the field experience hour requirements for the earlier field experiences? 
For each of the first three semesters of the program, MAT students are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of field experience in a local public school classroom (15 hours during each eight-week session). This gives each MAT student a total of 90 hours of classroom experience prior to the final semester of candidate teaching.

How much will the MAT Program cost? 
Because there are no local scholarships presently available for graduate programs, Reinhardt is offering a reduced rate of tuition for the MAT Program. 2015-2016 graduate tuition is set at $440.00 per credit hour. All MAT students are enrolled in 12 hours per semester, so the total semester tuition is approximately $5280.00 plus a $60.00 technology fee and the cost of textbooks. For specific questions related to tuition and fees, please visit the following link: http://www.reinhardt.edu/Current-Students/businessoffice/ tuitionandfees.html. For financial aid and assistance, you may contact the Office of Financial Aid at Reinhardt University at (770) 720-5667 or e-mail financialaid@reinhardt.edu. You can also visit the following link: http://www.reinhardt.edu/financial-aid/graduate/index.html. Each year, tuition may increase slightly.

How do I apply for admission to the MAT Program, and is there an application deadline? 
Please see the MAT Initial Admission Requirements on the following page. There is no MAT application deadline. When an applicant has successfully submitted all MAT admission requirements, he or she is accepted into the program. The enrollment cap for each campus has been set at 25 students. The application period will stay open until a total of 50 slots for both campuses has been filled. After that point, applicants to the MAT program are contacted by the Office of Graduate Studies and placed on a waiting list.
STEP ONE: OFFICIALLY APPLY TO REINHARDT UNIVERSITY AND THE MAT PROGRAM.

1. The applicant will submit an online Graduate Studies Application: (http://www.reinhardt.edu/Graduate/MAT/Admissions_Info.html).
2. The applicant will submit an Official Transcript that reflects a Bachelor’s Degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a minimum 2.50 GPA (on a 4.0 scale). NOTE: If the transcript will be under a different last name (i.e. maiden name, etc.), this should be noted on the admission application appropriately.
3. The applicant will submit a copy of the original GACE Reporting Score Form that officially documents passing scores on the GACE Program Admission Assessment in Reading (Test #200), Mathematics (Test #201), and Writing (Test #202), or the Combined Test I, II, and III (#700). For more GACE information, visit their website at http://www.gace.ets.org.

When the applicant receives the official GACE scores through an e-mail, he or she may forward the e-mail to the Office of Graduate Studies at GradStudies@reinhardt.edu.

EXEMPTIONS: The GACE Program Admission Assessment may be exempted if sufficient scores are obtained on the following:
- SAT® (1000 on Verbal/Critical Reading, and Math)
- ACT® (43 on English and Math) or
- GRE® (1030 Combined Score for Verbal and Quantitative; after 8-1-11, 297 Verbal and Quantitative)

For specific information about GACE Program Admission Assessment exemptions, applicants can visit the following Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) link:
http://www.gapsc.com/EducatorPreparation/Assessment/BasicSkillsInfo.aspx

NOTE: An applicant can be provisionally accepted to the MAT program contingent upon an acceptable application, official transcripts, and passing scores on the GACE Program Admission Assessment.

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STEP TWO: DEMONSTRATE A CONSISTENT ETHICAL BEHAVIOR AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GEORGIA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMISSION (GaPSC) CODE OF ETHICS.

4. The applicant must complete the GACE Georgia Educator Ethics – Program Entry (Test 350) Assessment.

The applicant should add Reinhardt University as a score recipient when he or she registers for Test Code 350 in order for Reinhardt University to receive notice that the applicant has completed the assessment. For specific information about the new Educator Ethics Assessment, go to http://gage.ets.org/ethics/about.

5. The applicant will submit a completed Criminal Background Check from the county sheriff’s office where he or she resides.

NOTE: An applicant can be fully accepted to the MAT program contingent upon an acceptable background check and documentation of Georgia Educators Ethics-Program Entry (Test 350 Assessment).

FULL ACCEPTANCE TO MAT PROGRAM

STEP THREE: SIGNIFY A COMMITMENT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAT PROGRAM AND REGISTER FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER OF MAT COURSEWORK.

6. The applicant will sign and submit an MAT Cohort Letter of Commitment.
7. The applicant will sign and submit a Reinhardt University Registration Form.

NOTE: An applicant can attend MAT classes contingent upon receipt of the registration form and commitment letter.

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the Office of Graduate Studies at GradStudies@reinhardt.edu or 770-720-5797. For specific questions about the MAT program, contact Dr. Cindy Kiernan at CMK@Reinhardt.edu or (770) 720-5889. Keep this checklist for your records.